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A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

ON

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - A CASE STUDY OF SWAYAM SHIKSHAN PRAYOG (NGO) IN MAHARASHTRA

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I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women have achieved - by Dr. B.R.Ambedkar.

INTRODUCTION

In traditional societies, even more than elsewhere, women empowerment does not occur easily or overnight. There is a big percentage of able and talented work force, both poor women & youth in the rural villages mostly without employment. Due to lack of financial support formal education & exposure to opportunities, they still remain unemployed & are not able to make any contribution to the family or to the community. In the case described, there was evidence of such change beginning, to which the project had apparently contributed. It was most noticeable among certain types of women. Perhaps one of the most important emerging lessons is that NGOs groups helped in women empowerment, in their social aspects, NGO play a vital role in such empowerment. This argues for placing emphasis on sustaining groups beyond the life of the project, which indeed was done in this instance.

Only when women are empowered, we may build a world that is worthwhile to live in. The cause to empower women must not become lighter under any circumstances and there should be persistent & genuine efforts to achieve gender equality

The women's movement and a wide-spread network of non-Government Organizations which have strong grass-roots existence and deep insight into women's concerns have contributed in inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women.

Since women include the majority of the population below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household & social discrimination, macro- economic policies & poverty eradication programmes will specifically address the needs and problems of such women. There will be improved implementation of programmes which are already women oriented with special targets for women. Steps will be taken for mobilization of poor women and convergence of services, by offering them a range of economic and social options, along with necessary support measures to enhance their capabilities.

"Education in general and Higher Education in particular acts as an insurance for Women Empowerment."

What is the meaning of Women Empowerment?

The term "empowerment" means to give somebody the power or authority to do something (Oxford Dictionary).

Women Empowerment refers to the creation of an environment for women where they can make decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society. Women Empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights. In India problems cannot be tackled by the government alone. So support of NGOs are necessary. Some of the organizations are engaged in implementing Government Development programmes independently; Here NGOs are the one on whom Government can rest.

Since last many decades several associations & institutions are operating at International, National & regional levels for promotion of women empowerment. After the natural disaster of earthquake in Latur & Osmanabad district in 1993 responsibility for building community resilience could not rested with Government sector alone. More than 70% rebuilding process rested with NGOs.

Swayam Shikshan Prayog formed in 1993 to assist in reconstruction & rehabilitation efforts in the aftermath of deadly earthquake in Maharashtra. It began its operations in 1994 in the earthquake affected area Latur district for the reconstruction and rehabilitation. It provided a number of significant lessons that have since been applied to develop a model for disaster management and reconstruction across the country and abroad also. Here attempt is made to discuss the role of SSP in women empowerment, their activities, schemes & programmes undertaken to improve empowerment.

SSP was founded with the aim to empower women at the grassroots level with leadership and entrepreneurial skills so that they can work towards creating a sustainable community. It enables women to take on the roles of community leaders and change makers in disaster and climate threatened regions in India.

Today, the SSP Group consists of experienced teams and four established social enterprises together with:

1. Sakhi Social Enterprise Network (SSEN)

2. Sakhi Samudaya Kosh (SSK)

3. Sakhi Arogya Samudaya Trust

4. SURE (Sakhi Unique Rural Enterprise)

Sakhi Social Enterprise Network (SSEN) a subsidiary of SSP was established for learning and development organization through 'Self education for empowerment' to bring women and communities from the margin to the main stream of development.

SSP that has tremendous insights and experience with working with those at the Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP) towards fostering models, co-creating affordable products,

The journey of creating Sakhis started almost 24years back i.e. post the Latur Earthquake in Maharashtra where SSP initiated rehabilitation building and construction through women self help groups and providing masonry and community development training to such SHG leaders. Over the years the grassroots women leaders approached SSP for acquiring empowerment skills as they wished to also economically empower themselves to make a difference to their households and community .Community initiatives and peer to peer exchanges helps SSP to achieve their mission, canvas proven models are being replicated in similar context such as Kenya, Philippines, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia through local women groups.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

R.Himalinidevi (Aug-2014) "WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEUR-SHIP": She had studied various aspects of women empowerment in rural areas of the country which will solve the problem of unemployment & poverty eradication. The NGOs also worked as an efficient agent.

Dr. (Smt.) Rajeshwari M. Shettar (April 2015): "A STUDY ON ISSUES CHALLENGES OF WOMN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA": The author has highlighted that Empowerment of Women could only be achieved if their economic and social status is improved. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development.

Muthusami Kumaran (2014): "ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TRENDS OF NGOs IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT" In this paper he opines that the most severe social injustice which continues to exist in Indian society is gender inequality that subjects women to various forms of male domination and discrimination. Due to their mission alignments for the advancement of women, women empowerment NGOs are a natural fit in responding to the overall issue of gender injustice that threatens to undermine the society at large.

Klaus Deininger and Yanyan Liu (2009) In their study found that the poorest seem to be able to benefit not only socially but also economically. They suggests that to introduce a programme

that not only fosters group formation but also supports more mature groups through federation and credit access in order to have significant economic benefits in the long term.
Ganesamurthy (2007) In his study stated that majority of the women continues to be confined to micro, small-scale enterprises in spite of efforts made toward economic empowerment of women.

Suneetha (2007) has explained that the empowerment of women became necessary as they are almost fifty percent of the population and are being discriminated at all fronts. Women play a vital role in the social & economic transformation of a country. She found all that the implementation of DWCRA programme has empowered the women beneficiaries with significant growth in their income and employment in the back ward districts.

Rizwana (2004) study states that MAVIM was established to facilitate implementation of the activities for the development of women in Maharashtra, under various schemes leading to income generating activities. The study also analyzed the impact of MAVIM on the empowerment of women.

National perspective plan for women (1988-2000) published by Department of Women and Child welfare provides information of importance of voluntary action, women in various media, provision of law to protect her rights.

PROBLEM AREA OF THE STUDY

In brief this study tries to give an answer to following questions.

1. Are SSP's efforts making roots (grassroot women) empowered to stand the tree still?
2. Are SSP's steps moving towards its mission of sustainable community development?
3. Has SSP created new platform for women empowerment?

RATIONALE OF RESEARCH (NEED OF RESEARCH)

Empowerment of women is essential to harness the women labour in the mainstream of economic development. According to Swami Vivekanand, "…… ***There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of the women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing.*** (Yojana, Aug. 2001). Women have to play an important role in the building up of every economy. Women who form almost one half of the world's population constitute the visible majority of the poor. Women either solely or largely support an increasing number of families. Women experience poverty more than man. When money is given to men, it may not benefit the family but when women manage money, it is found to be better utilized.

Projects aiming to improve the living conditions of the poor cannot, therefore be effective unless women participate in their formulation and implementation as contributors as well as beneficiaries

. "Increasing women's capabilities and empowering them is the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development.

SSP is playing a vital role for various types of training programmes and finding out solutions to overcome the obstacles in women empowerment.

To find the answer of some of the problems faced by the Sakhis, research is required to be carried by the other researcher too.

To find out how training programmes may be designed to promote women empowerment whereby women may be encouraged to learn knowledge, skill and ability to run economic activities.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Women constitute one of the most vulnerable sections in society. For addressing their problems and improving their conditions several women focused interventions by NGOs have created opportunity for economic empowerment. As well as sustained energy for awareness creation will provide women with several opportunities for change. Government and NGOs ensured women by taking several corrective measures i.e. various schemes and developmental programmes to bring them from Margin to Mainstream. This research focuses on various initiatives taken by SSP in social and financial aspects of rural women in different projects in Maharashtra.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To study various methods used by SSP for women empowerment.
2. To identify hindrances in the path of women empowerment.
3. To study role of women members in rural development programmes in different districts.
4. To study various aspects related to women empowerment such as Social, Economical, Environmental, and Cultural.
5. To assess the role of the SSP in development of women empowerment in Maharashtra.

HYPOTHESIS

1. All the Sakhis are independent to take decisions in the areas of Planning, Operations, Purchasing of Raw Materials, Marketing the products, Finance & others.

2. Socio-economic status of women is uplifted because of various activities of SSP.
3. There is no association between age and level of empowerment of the Sakhis.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection from different 'Sakhis' in a structured questionnaire, will be edited, coded, classified, tabulated and will be analyzed by using Microsoft Excel. Interpretation/findings will be carried out with descriptive statistical analysis viz Percentage value, Chi-square test etc

Sources used for data and information collection in the present working system;

1. **PRIMARY DATA**: Data will be collected from Sakhis of SSP by using structured questionnaire & personal interview.

2. **SECONDARY DATA**: For secondary data related to women empowerment is to be collected from journals, pamphlets, leaflets, different website (including SSP's), and previous studies by scholars etc.

SAMPLE DESIGN

Swayam Shikshan Prayog at present is related with Six districts, 300 villages & approx. 25000 Sakhis working at village level in the state of Maharashtra. Sample size selected for this study purpose will be 760 sakhis from three districts where SSP is having there presence. This size is calculated using standard formula for sample size selection with confidence level of 95% & Margin of error as 3.5%.

SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

1. Geographical Scope: Operational area of SSP in Maharashtra (Latur, Osmanabad, Solapur, Nanded, Washim, Yawatmal etc.)
2. Few of the women will be studied through Questionnaire, personal interview & case-study method.
3. Operational Scope: At present SSP is running in four wings & all them will be studied.
4. Periodical Scope: This study will cover data for period of year 2013-2018

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The study is limited to the activities carried out by SSP within the time span of year 2013-2018 only
2. The study is limited to the women (Sakhis) related to SSP only.
3. The limitations of financial and human resources (respondents) have restricted the study of Sakhis.
4. Though an attempt is made to select the sample from all villages & to make it true representation, it is possible that the result of this sample survey perhaps may not be applicable to the census.

CHAPTER SCHEME

1. INTRODUCTION
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
3. PROFILE OF MAHARASHTRA & SSP
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
5. ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION OF DATA
6. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS
7. CONCLUSIONS

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANNEXURE

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